

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated May 19, 2004, the Examiner noted an incorrect usage of reference numerals, which has been corrected. The specification at that location also has been editorially amended for clarification purposes.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al in view of Lawson. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al and Lawson, further in view of Asami et al. Claim 5 also was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al in view of Lawson. Claims 6 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al in view of Lawson, further in view of Theilacker et al. Claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis et al in view of Lawson, further in view of Saito.

These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

With regard to the Examiner's basic combination of Ellis et al and Lawson, Applicants submit that the Ellis et al reference discloses a patient support table having a pad thereon, which sits on top of the exterior surface of the support table. The Lawson et al reference does disclose fiber composite material with electrical conductors embedded therein, however, the product disclosed in the Lawson et al reference is for extremely rugged structures that require ice protection. Use of the product in aircraft and windmill blades is given as an example. The use of such a product for warming a patient in a medical examination or treatment device is nowhere discussed in the Lawson et al reference, and in view of the aforementioned extremely aggressive ice situations in which the product disclosed in the Lawson et al reference is contemplated for use, there is no teaching, suggestion or motivation

to employ the electrically conductive composite material disclosed in Lawson et al for the relatively benign use of warming a human being.

Moreover, in view of the basic structure disclosed in the Ellis et al reference, even if a product such as described in the Lawson et al reference were used therein, there is no teaching that would cause a person of ordinary skill in the field of patient positioning tables to make the table itself out of the composite material. Since the Ellis et al table is intended for use with a pad thereon, and since in the Ellis et al reference it is the pad that provides the heating for the patient, it is the pad in Ellis et al in which a product such as disclosed in Lawson et al would be embodied. There is no teaching, motivation or inducement for a person of ordinary skill in the field of medical examination table design, who has not had the benefit of first reading the present disclosure, to completely discard the Ellis et al pad, since that is the very element in Ellis et al that provides the heating. If any modification to the Ellis et al structure, without the impermissible use of hindsight, is to be made, it would be to modify the heating element in Ellis et al, namely the pad thereof, rather than the table itself.

Claim 1 has been amended to make clear that the heating element is integrated into the table beneath the exterior contour thereof, on which the patient lies. As noted above, in the absence of any teaching in either of the Ellis et al or Lawson et al references regarding the use of the composite material disclosed in Lawson et al in the context of a patient support table, there is no reason why a person of ordinary skill in the field of patient table design would be taught to make the table itself out of a material such as disclosed in Lawson et al, since the table

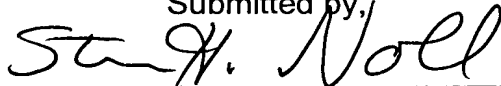
itself in Ellis et al does not participate in heating the patient. In Ellis et al, this function is performed by the pad on the table.

Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the subject matter of the claims 1, 2, 4 and 7-9 would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the field of patient table design based on the teachings of Ellis et al and Lawson et al.

Since the Ellis et al and Lawson et al combination formed the basis for all of the further rejections, Applicants do not consider it necessary to individually discuss all of the other references. In general, it is the position of the Applicants that even if the Ellis et al/Lawson et al combination were further modified in accordance with the teachings of any of those additional references, the subject matter of the respective dependent claims still would not result, since the Ellis et al/Lawson et al combination fails to teach the subject matter of independent claim 1 and independent claim 9.

All claims of the application are therefore submitted to be in condition for allowance, and early reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Submitted by,



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